



Destination Guide: Seattle



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AAA Destination Guide: Seattle includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

Seattle is so scenically blessed it's almost laughable. Just try to picture it: The snowcapped Olympic Mountains frame the western sky, while



14,410-foot Mount Rainier, although some 90 miles from the city, is a majestic presence on the southern horizon. Puget Sound is sculpted with an intricate network of bays and inlets and speckled with islands large and small, resembling nothing so much as polished emeralds flung onto the surface of an intense blue soup. The shore of long, skinny Lake

Washington is beautified by an almost continuous series of sylvan parks and greenbelts. And Seattle sits right in the middle of it all. The vistas are, in a word, awesome.

If you don't spend all day gawking at nature's splendor, myriad activities await. This is a city chock full of distinctive neighborhoods—from hip, socially diverse Capitol Hill to the elegant homes of Queen Anne to salty, Scandinavian-flavored Ballard, a reminder of Seattle's maritime heritage. So come on. Explore the Pioneer Square Historic District. Visit the attractions at Seattle Center. Watch fish being flung at Pike Place Market. Zip to the top of the Space Needle. Above all, drink plenty of coffee—you're going to be busy.

Essentials

Every Seattle sojourn should begin with a stop at Pike Place Market. The fishmongers' salmon-tossing antics alone are worth a visit, which makes the gorgeous array of produce, delectable baked goods and myriad craft stalls simply icing on the cake.

Take an invigorating morning walk on the paved path around Green Lake, which is popular with legions of strolling, jogging and cycling Seattleites.

For a crash course in local history, go on the Underground Tour of the Pioneer Square Historic District. It's fun and educational, and yes—parts of it are subterranean.

Admire the view from Kerry Park on Queen Anne Hill, which unveils a quintessential Seattle panorama: bristling downtown skyline, Elliott Bay waterfront and Mount Rainier as a backdrop.

Despite its rainy reputation, Seattle does enjoy plenty of summer sunshine. Seafair, held from early July to early August, is the city's big, exuberant warm-weather festival, complete with hydroplane races, a Blue Angels air show, visiting naval ships, the Miss Seafair pageant and a downtown Torchlight Parade.

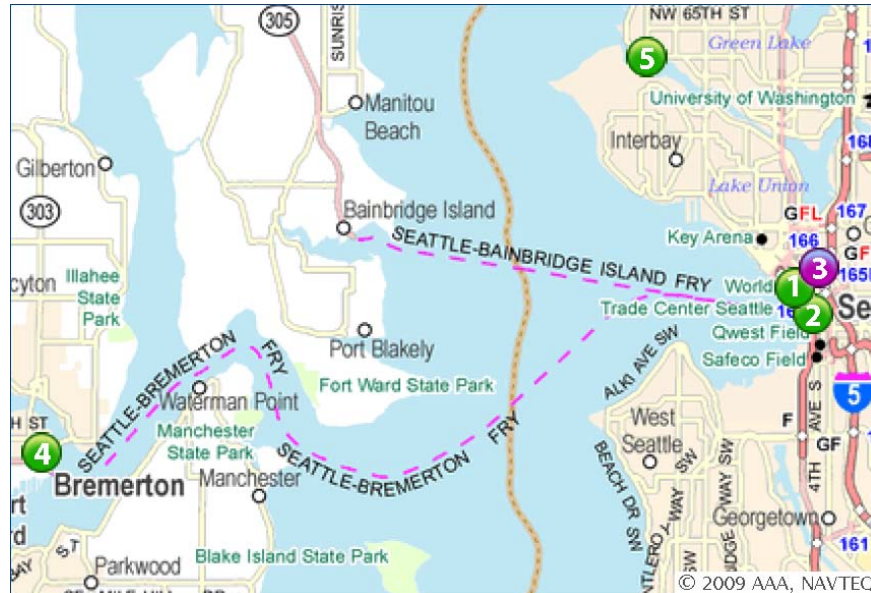
While away some time in Fremont, the self-styled "center of the universe." This eclectic neighborhood of shops and eateries is graced with such delightful examples of public art as "Waiting for the Interurban" and the "Fremont Troll."

Hop aboard the Bremerton Ferry and marvel as the boat navigates a spectacular passage through the channel approaching Bremerton.



Visit the [Lake Washington Ship Canal](#), used by all types and sizes of vessels to negotiate a chain of freshwater lakes en route to saltwater Puget Sound, and watch salmon and trout swimming upstream to their Cascade Mountains spawning grounds via a fish ladder.

Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Curl up with a good tome at the Elliott Bay Book Company, Seattle's premier independent bookstore and a local institution.

Although it now has a worldwide presence, Starbucks began in Seattle. Indulge in your favorite coffee concoction at Pike Place Market—where the chain's very first outlet opened in 1971—or downtown at 4th Avenue and Pine Street, a great people-watching spot in the heart of the shopping district.

Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Pike Place Market

85 Pike St
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 682-7453



2. Underground Tour

608 1st Ave
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 682-4646



3. Seafair

911 Pine St
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 728-0123

4. Bremerton

Chamber of Commerce
286 4th St
Bremerton, WA 98337
Phone: (360) 479-3579

5. Lake Washington Ship Canal

3015 NW 54th St
Seattle, WA 98107
Phone: (206) 783-7059



Seattle in 3 Days

Three days is barely enough time to get to know any major destination. But AAA travel editors suggest these activities to make the most of your time in Seattle.

Day 1: Morning

Spend the morning at [Pike Place Market](#) (trust us; you'll want to spend the day). This venerable market celebrated its centennial in 2007, and it's quite likely to be around another 100 years from now. It's the best place in Seattle to meet a friend (the traditional spot is under the market's neon sign where Rachel the bronze piggybank stands) and then wander around looking, smelling, tasting and buying. Arrive early (before 8 a.m.) so you can banter with the vendors as they set up; if you're lucky you may get some inside information on hot purchases, not to mention first pick at the flower stalls and produce stands.

Have breakfast at the Sound View Café (south end of the Main Arcade). Snag a window table, because the view over Elliott Bay to the distant

Olympic Mountains is wonderful. The menu is standard—omelets, pancakes, sandwiches, soups, chowders—but you can watch seagulls wheel and ferries cruise the water while you eat.

Now you're ready to explore. Fruits, vegetables and flowers are market mainstays, and the artful arrangements and jewel-like colors of farm-grown Northwest products are a joy to behold. Pike Place vendors are no-nonsense, and their displays are likely to include hand-lettered signs with friendly reminders like "pleeza no squeezeza." The whole fish, spidery-looking crabs and jumbo shrimp at the seafood stands are all glisteningly fresh, and the boisterous antics of the fishmongers—flinging critters while cracking wise—always draw a crowd.

Follow your nose to the bakeries and unsuccessfully resist the urge to pick up some gooey-good cinnamon buns, sugar-glazed apple fritters, nutty almond cookies or rich cheesecake brownies to go. Pike Place Bakery (1501 Pike Place) and Three Girls Bakery (1514 Pike Place) are particularly mouthwatering. This market is just chock-full of specialty food vendors. Beecher's Handmade Cheese (1600 Pike Place) makes a yummy grilled cheese panini with tomato and basil; Uli's Famous Sausage (1511 Pike Place), a classic bratwurst slathered with mustard. Non-culinary vendors offer aromatic homemade soaps, handcrafted belt buckles, souvenir trinkets and just about everything else.

One important tip: Restrooms are down the stairs at the south end of the Main Arcade (look for the sign). Many of the surrounding businesses don't permit you to use the restroom unless you're a paying customer.

Afternoon

If you still can't tear yourself away from the market (and it's hard), have lunch here, too. [Cafe Campagne](#) (1600 Post Alley) is the casual downstairs counterpart of the more formal restaurant upstairs. Indulge in a bacon and onion tart or *bucherondin de chèvre*, the baked cheese and croutons served atop arugula and frisée (free-ZEY) greens dressed in a scallion vinaigrette. Afterward, pick up your favorite beverage to go at Starbucks (1912 Pike Place); this is the global coffee purveyor's original location.

From the main market entrance at the corner of Pike Street and 1st Avenue, turn right and walk down 1st Avenue two blocks to the [Seattle Art Museum Downtown](#). The 48-foot-tall "Hammering Man," a black steel sculpture, stands guard outside the entrance, his arm raising and lowering four times a minute. SAM's galleries exhibit art from every corner of the world, often mixing media, concepts, centuries and artists in the same room. If you don't feel like walking through the entire collection, the main staircase in the museum's free visitor area, called the Art Ladder, features three public installations incorporating optical illusions into their design.

TASTE Restaurant (it's in the museum but also has a separate entrance on 1st Avenue) is a dimly lit, intimate place at night, but in the afternoon it's a bustling and bright. Stop for carrot cake or a bowl of house-made ice cream and discuss Albert Bierstadt's 1870 landscape masterpiece "Puget Sound on the Pacific Coast" or the very cool installation "Inopportune: Stage One," automobiles suspended from the ceiling amid a profusion of multi-channeled light tubes.

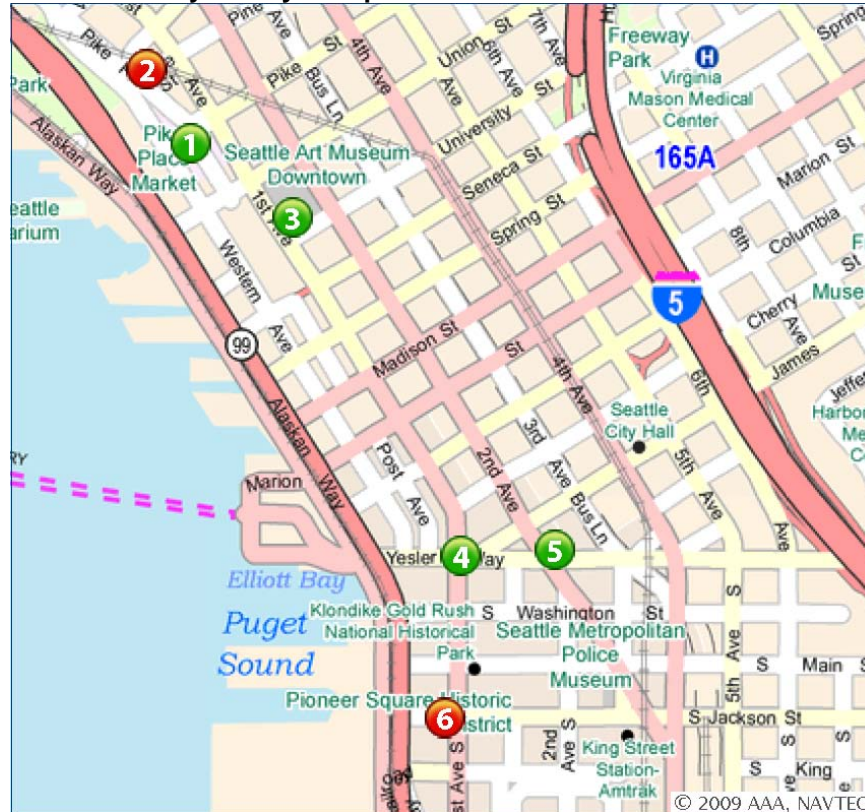
Continue down 1st Avenue to Madison Street and then walk up three blocks to the Seattle Central Library. The utilitarian name certainly doesn't allude to its strikingly futuristic look, which gives off the impression of glass wrapped in a very large net. The design by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas is anything but stuffy, from illuminated escalators to fourth-floor hallways painted an exceedingly bright shade of red. Even if you don't take one of the guided public architectural tours it's a fascinating place to walk around. There are views of neighboring skyscrapers and Elliott Bay from the reading room on level 10.

Walk down Madison back to 1st Avenue, turn left and head toward Pioneer Square. The [Pioneer Square Historic District](#) covers a 30-block area. This was Seattle's first downtown, before an 1889 fire demolished the mostly wooden buildings. Rich with history, for a time decrepit but for the most part charmingly refurbished, it's a prime tourist destination. Relax on one of the benches in small, tree-shaded Pioneer Park. The

park's totem is a replica of one carved by Tlingit Indians in the late 19th century.

If it's a clear day, take the elevator to the top of the Smith Tower for a view of the city below. This was Seattle's first skyscraper, although it's now relatively dwarfed by a number of taller structures.

Seattle in 3 Days – Day 1 Map



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Evening

Regulars swear by Il Terrazzo Carmine. This Pioneer Square favorite is old-school Italian all the way, from the background music to the decadent dessert tray. The food is reliably delicious and also reliably pricey; if you

Day 1 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)



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- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Pike Place Market

85 Pike St
 Seattle, WA 98101
 Phone: (206) 682-7453



2. Cafe Campagne

1600 Post Alley at Pine St
 Seattle, WA 98101
 Phone: (206) 728-2233

3. Seattle Art Museum Downtown

1300 1st Ave
 Seattle, WA 98101
 Phone: (206) 654-3137



4. Pioneer Square Historic District

118 S. Main St
 Seattle, WA 98104



5. Smith Tower

506 2nd Ave
 Seattle, WA 98104
 Phone: (206) 622-4004



6. Il Terrazzo Carmine

411 1st Ave S
 Seattle, WA 98104
 Phone: (206) 467-7797

don't feel like stuffing yourself—or emptying your wallet—order the risotto of the day or caesar salad, which tastes as lovely as it looks. Reservations are advised.

If it's not too late, enjoy a stroll along Pioneer Square's brick building-lined streets. The nighttime entertainment choices are many, from cozy taverns to comedy to raucous live music joints. Local rock bands play most nights at The Central Saloon (207 1st Ave.), while at the New Orleans Creole Restaurant (114 1st Ave.) the music is blues, jazz and Dixieland. These two venues participate in Joint Cover, which provides entry to several different clubs for one cover charge (\$5 Sun.-Thurs., \$10 Fri.-Sat.).

Note: The Pioneer Square area can get pretty rowdy at night, and it also attracts loiterers and the homeless. Enjoy yourself, but stay alert and keep common sense safety precautions in mind

Day 2: Morning

Grab breakfast at the Pioneer Square branch of the Grand Central Baking Company (214 1st Ave. in the Grand Central Arcade). In warm weather sit on the cobblestone patio and enjoy a freshly made pastry with your espresso; if it's chilly sit inside by the fireplace. Then take the [Underground Tour](#) and bone up on Pioneer Square history. You'll learn all kinds of fascinating stuff about opium dens, bootleg operations and Seattle's once-primitive sewer system on this above- and below-ground jaunt.

Browse to your heart's content at the Elliott Bay Book Co. (101 S. Main St. at 1st Avenue). The books are stocked on cedar shelves in a meandering series of nook-and-cranny rooms. Then take your treasures downstairs to The Elliott Bay Café and have a cup of organic java. The brick walls of yore are cream colored now, and blond wood tables and chairs give the cafe a sunny feel. Sandwiches are terrific; try the Moroccan steak sandwich, stuffed into a pita with mint-flavored yogurt and feta, or a pan bagne—garlicky mashed chickpeas, grilled veggies and goat cheese on semolina bread.

Schedule some time to explore the [International District](#) (also called Chinatown and known locally as “the ID”), which lies east of the Pioneer Square Historic District. A true melting pot of Asian cultures, this area is home to Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Korean and Cambodian residents, so even though it continues to gentrify the ID maintains a distinctive identity.

Fast Metro Transit and Sound Transit bus service takes advantage of the 1.3-mile Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, which connects the International District with four downtown stations. Sound Transit's Central Link light-rail service also uses the tunnel. Metro Transit buses and trolleys (electric buses) operate on surface streets; those serving the International District converge at the intersection of 5th Avenue S. and S.

Jackson Street. The fare is \$1.75 (\$2 during peak hours—Mon.-Fri. 6-9 a.m. and 3-6 p.m.). Exact cash fare is required. Bus service is free daily from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. within the Ride Free Area, bounded by Battery Street on the north, 6th Avenue on the east, Jackson Street on the south and the waterfront on the west.

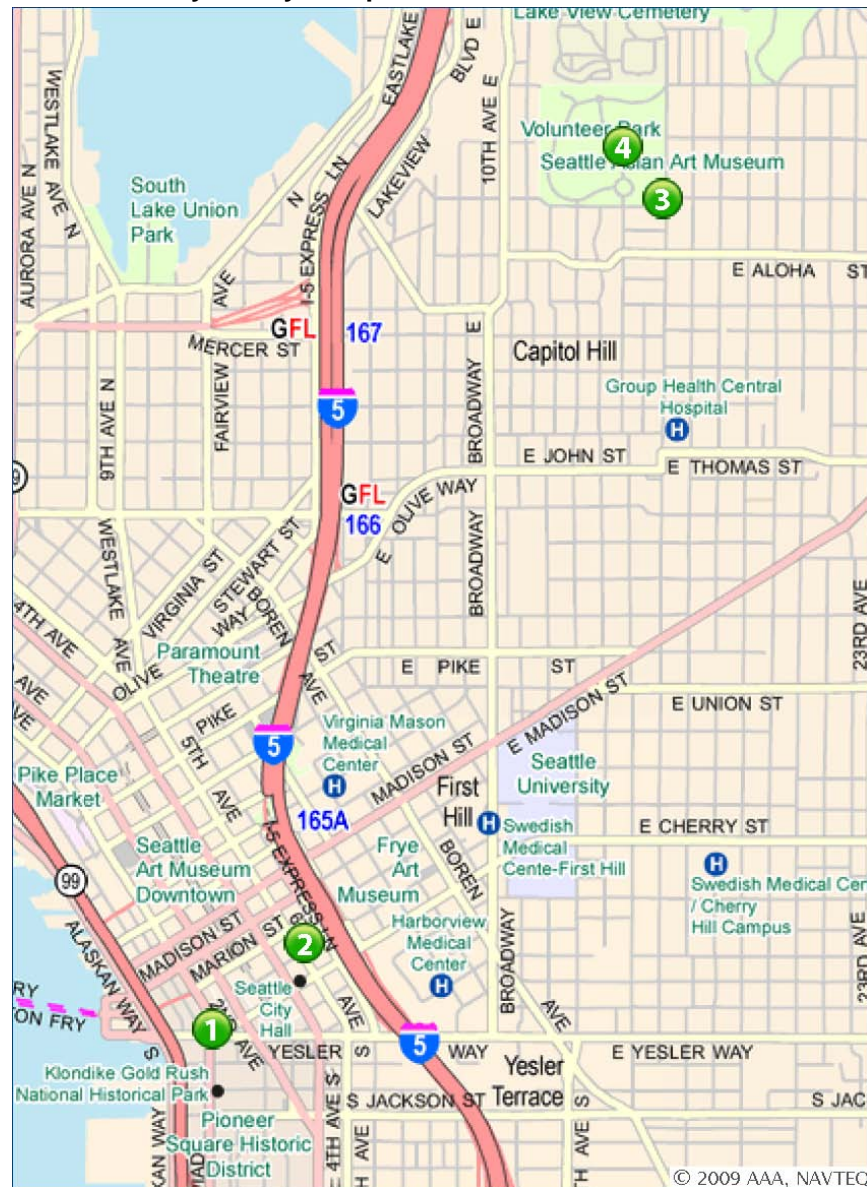
Cultural and historical roots were honored with the grand opening of the Historic Chinatown Gate in February 2008. Painted vibrant shades of red and gold, with an orb perched atop the roofline (to keep away bad luck), the 45-foot archway straddles S. King Street at 5th Avenue S. The structure, a symbolic welcoming, is similar to those marking Chinese communities in San Francisco, Portland, Vancouver and Washington, D.C.

Uwajimaya, 600 5th Ave. S., is a big Asian grocery store that anchors Uwajimaya Village, a complex of shops and restaurants. The Uwajimaya food court is a great place to have lunch. Golden-brown ducks hang by their necks in roasting ovens and the aroma of curry fills the air. Try *banh mi*, a Vietnamese sandwich with beef, onions, pickled peppers and cilantro on a crusty baguette. Dip salad rolls—translucent rice paper wrapped around shrimp, veggies and thin noodles—in peanut sauce. Slurp up *pho*, the traditional Vietnamese noodle soup. Dessert should be a piece of light, sweet strawberry cake from the Yummy House, a local bakery. It's fast food, but filling, good and inexpensive fast food.

Afternoon

From the International District head to Capitol Hill, an ethnically and socially diverse neighborhood that lies astride a ridge between downtown's skyscrapers and Lake Washington. While away some time at [Volunteer Park](#), Seattle's most elegant greensward. It's a lovely expanse of old cedars and spruces, manicured lawns, formal gardens and glass-surfaced ponds, surrounded by the mansions of old-money Seattle families. Walk through the park's Victorian-style, steel and cast-iron Conservatory, filled with a riot of orchids, tropical plants and huge cactuses.


Seattle in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



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The park also contains the Seattle Asian Art Museum, downtown SAM's sister gallery. The exhibits at SAAM focus on Chinese, South Asian and Southeast Asian art. Gaze upon urns, exquisite porcelain bowls, a bronze depiction of Guanyin—a multi-armed, multi-headed female figure considered by followers of Buddhism to be the personification of compassion and kindness—and of course, statues of Buddah himself. Then have a soothing cup of jasmine tea at the museum's TASTE Café.

Day 2 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com

 - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Underground Tour

608 1st Ave
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 682-4646



3. Volunteer Park

1400 E. Galer St
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 684-4743

2. International District

700 5th Ave
Seattle, WA 98104

4. Seattle Asian Art Museum

1400 E. Prospect St
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 654-3100



Evening

The 10 or so blocks of north-south Broadway between E. Pine and E. Roy streets are the heart of Capitol Hill, a haven for alternative culture, the center of Seattle's gay community and a hangout for punk rock kids. Neon hair, outré clothing, multiple piercings and full-body tattoos are par for the course, but that doesn't mean you'll be ostracized for looking, well, boring—anything goes here.

Broadway shops cater to youth culture, so if you're looking for vintage clothing, funky jewelry, unusual art or totally cool stuff like Ethiopian wands or little Mexican *calaveras* (skeletons) decked out in wacky costumes, you've come to the right place. Window shop until you find a place that strikes your fancy. Broadway Market (401 E. Broadway at E. Harrison Street) is the neighborhood "mall"—a big QFC food store, Hot Topic, Urban Outfitters, Blooms on Broadway and a handful of local businesses under one roof.

Broadway also is lined with restaurants, so you have plenty of choices for dinner. Siam on Broadway (616 E. Broadway) serves solid renditions of Thai standards, from pad Thai with fried tofu squares to curry beef. You can watch the chefs whip everything together while you wait. Pizza Pagliacci (426 E. Broadway) is casual and lively; you order cafeteria style from the delivery stations (good, freshly made pizza by the slice or by the pie, calzones, pasta and green salads), pay and take your little feast to a table and enjoy.

If you just want to chill at a movie afterward the Harvard Exit Theatre, 807 E. Roy St. at Harvard Avenue (north end of Broadway), shows current independent and foreign films. Originally a women's clubhouse, this was one of Seattle's first art-house theaters, and it still has a large and elegant lobby complete with grand piano and chandelier.

Note: A parking space is usually easier to find on one of the residential side streets a block or so off than along Broadway, but check signs to make sure you're not parked in a restricted area before leaving your car for the evening.

Day 3: Morning

Seattle Center, with its museums, park-like grounds and year-round special events, is the best place in the city to take kids. If time is short, just go to the top of the Space Needle; you don't need a timed ticket and lines usually aren't that long. The glass-enclosed, walk-around observation deck provides a panoramic view in every direction. The only caveat is the weather; don't bother if it's overcast or foggy. Instead, explore the exhibits at the Pacific Science Center. Devoted fans of visionary guitar hero Jimi Hendrix won't want to miss the exhibit devoted to the Seattle native at the Experience Music Project (EMP). The Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame is a must for sci-fi buffs with its collections of movie spaceships, weapons and space wear. A single admission gets you into both museums.

From the Space Needle, walk down Broad Street to Pier 70 on the waterfront and check out Olympic Sculpture Park. The outdoor art installations are interspersed among plantings of trees, shrubs and

flowers native to the Pacific Northwest. This is a prime downtown location; the view overlooking Elliott Bay west to the Olympics is inspiring. After tracing the zigzagging pathways and stopping to admire the bold "Father and Son" fountain that stands at the head of Pier 70, pick up an espresso from the cafe inside the PACCAR Pavilion and relax on the veranda.

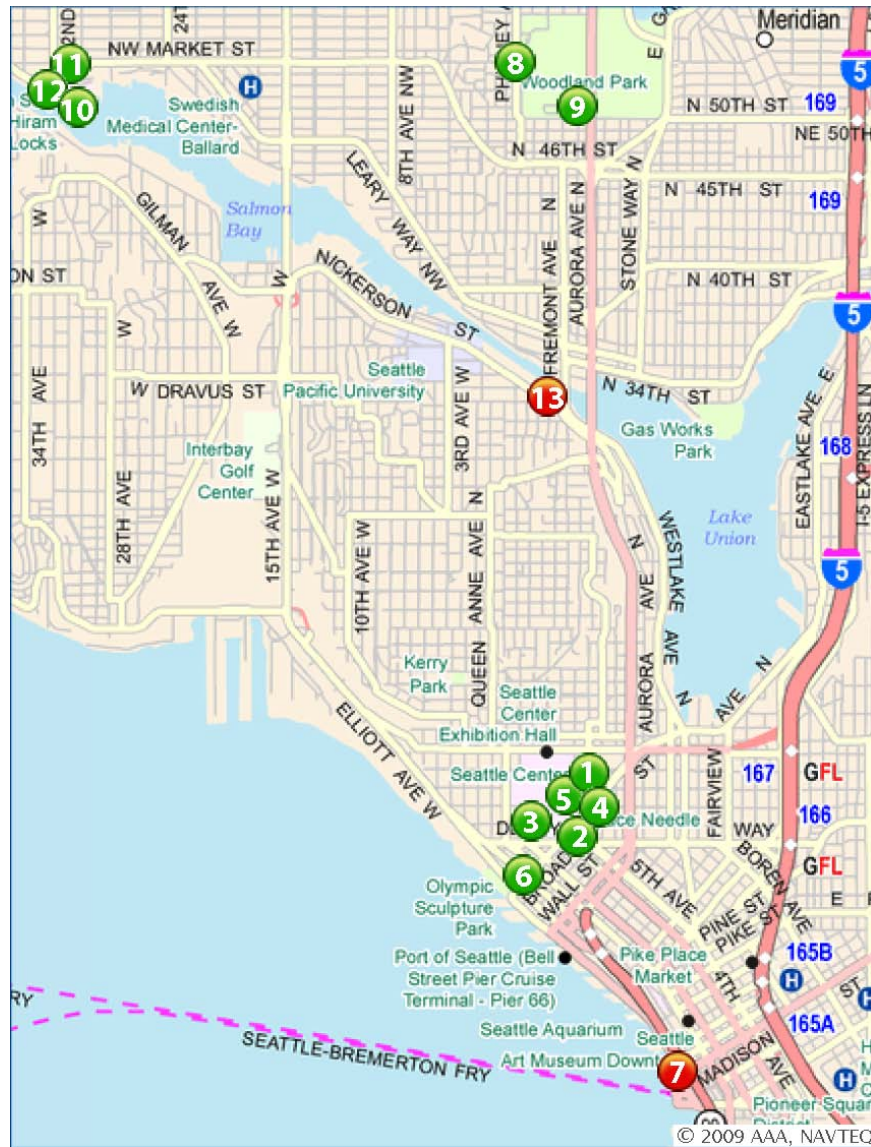
Afternoon

Seattle and seafood go together like yin and yang, so walk south along the waterfront to Pier 54 and have lunch at Ivar's Acres of Clams. Consult the daily fresh sheet to see what looks good, but you sure can't go wrong with the Dungeness crab salad, fish and chips or the deservedly popular Puget Sound clam chowder, brimming with clams, potatoes and bits of bacon. If it's nice outside, order from the Fish Bar walk-up window and sit at one of the picnic tables. Then pop into Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, a waterfront institution also at Pier 54. It's a quintessential souvenir stop and quasi museum with lots of antiques, including the requisite shrunken heads.

Grab your pith helmet and take Aurora Avenue (SR 99) north across the Lake Washington Ship Canal to Woodland Park and the Woodland Park Zoo. The animals live in a variety of themed habitats like the Tropical Rain Forest, home to gorillas, colobus monkeys, jaguars and other jungle denizens. Then spend a relaxing half hour breathing in the fragrance at the gorgeous Woodland Park Rose Garden. The roses are at their splendiferous peak from June through August, but due to Seattle's mild climate they're still in bloom well into October.

An alternate agenda is a jaunt to the Ballard neighborhood (get there by accessing east-west Market Street) and the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks. Watching vessels of all sizes pass through the navigation locks is fascinating. The Fish Ladder helps salmon swim at a gradual incline to their upstream spawning grounds; you can observe them go by through porthole windows. There's another garden here, the Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden. The trees and shrubs are a mix of exotic and indigenous species, and plantings vary according to the season. On a warm summer day it's a lovely stroll.

Seattle in 3 Days – Day 3 Map



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Day 3 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com



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- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Seattle Center

305 Harrison St
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 684-7200



2. Space Needle

219 4th Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 905-2100



3. Pacific Science Center

200 2nd Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 443-2001



4. Experience Music Project (EMP)

325 5th Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98121
Phone: (877) 454-7836



5. Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame

325 5th Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 770-2702



6. Olympic Sculpture Park

2901 Western Ave.
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 654-3100



7. Ivar's Acres of Clams

1001 Alaskan Way
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 624-6852

8. Woodland Park Zoo

5500 Phinney Ave N
Seattle, WA 98103
Phone: (206) 548-2599



9. Woodland Park Rose Garden

5500 Phinney Ave N
Seattle, WA 98103
Phone: (206) 684-4863

10. Hiram M. Chittenden Locks

4 mi. w. of I-5 exit 169
Seattle, WA 98107
Phone: (206) 783-7059



11. Fish Ladder

4 mi. w. of I-5 exit 169
Seattle, WA 98107

12. Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden

3015 NW 54th St
Seattle, WA 98107
Phone: (206) 783-7059

13. Ponti Seafood Grill

3014 3rd Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 284-3000

Evening

Fremont is a delightfully idiosyncratic neighborhood that bills itself—with tongue only slightly in cheek—as “the center of the universe.” Locals will tell you that the only correct way to enter Fremont is across the Fremont drawbridge, but if you do you’ll miss the Fremont Troll, a crouching 18-foot-tall statue hiding under the north end of the Aurora Bridge (at N. 36th Street), a block east. Fremont, in fact, is known for its quirky sidewalk art: the six people that constitute “Waiting for the Interurban” and a 16-foot bronze sculpture of communist revolutionary Vladimir Lenin are two well-known examples.

Fuel up at Peet’s Coffee & Tea (3401 Fremont Ave. N.) before browsing Fremont’s variety of offbeat shops. Frank and Dunya (3418 Fremont Ave. N.) supports Northwest artists by selling their arts, crafts and jewelry. The Dusty Strings Acoustic Music Shop (3406 Fremont Ave. N.) has an array of dulcimers, mandolins, banjos and other stringed instruments. Collectors favor Sonic Boom Records (3414 Fremont Ave. N.) for really obscure stuff on vinyl, but they also have new releases and used CDs. A Sonic Boom T-shirt makes an in-the-know souvenir.

Have dinner at Costas Opa Restaurant (3400 Fremont Ave. N.). Start with a classic Greek salad and then go for a specialty like chicken souvlaki or keftethes (Greek-style meatballs with rice and vegetables). Or if you still have a hankering for seafood, try [Ponti Seafood Grill](#); the waterside patios overlook the Fremont Bridge and the ship canal. Grilled marinated calamari is a superb appetizer; follow it up with Washington king salmon or Thai curry penne with scallops and crab. Finish with a ginger peach tart and vanilla ice cream and you’ll feel like you *are* at the center of the universe.

Restaurants

Our favorites include some of this destination’s best restaurants—from fine dining to simple fare.

Seattle is a city that definitely has hip foodie credentials, with a number of downtown restaurants that attract loyal regulars as well as visitors up for

a good meal in stylish surroundings. A discriminating clientele frequents the [Wild Ginger Asian Restaurant & Satay Bar](#), but the good news is that aside from the dress-to-be-seen element, Wild Ginger’s food, an eclectic potpourri of ethnic influences, is excellent. Start with one of the grilled satays—say chicken skewers or lightly grilled sea scallops—served with pickled cucumbers and an aromatic dipping sauce. Duck spiced with cinnamon and star anise is a house specialty, and the kitchen’s skill shows in dishes like wok-fried prawns in a barbecue sauce spiked with garlic, hoisin, peanuts, scallions and dried chilies. The Triple Door lounge beneath the restaurant has a nightly menu of live music.

Carnivores can’t go wrong at the [Metropolitan Grill](#). The dining room’s high ceilings, mahogany tables and dark green, brass-accented booths exude Old World charm, making it a popular after-work destination for downtown suits as well as the theater crowd on big event nights. The “Met” focuses on classic cuts like filet mignon, delmonico and porterhouse, carved tableside. California ranch-raised, Kobe-style Wagyu beef will up the tab considerably, but you can order the less expensive Wagyu burger, a hefty 20 ounces that comes with Gruyère cheese, caramelized onions and a trio of condiments. Accompany your choice with a robust pile of onion rings and one of the wine cellar’s many fine reds. Local “best steakhouse” articles usually have this one on their list.

As good as the Metropolitan for steaks is [The Brooklyn Seafood, Steak & Oyster House](#), across from the Seattle Art Museum Downtown. Go all out with steak Oscar—filet mignon, Dungeness crab and asparagus with rich béarnaise sauce, accompanied by a tower of cheddar potatoes and celeraic-fennel gratinéé. Oysters are the seafood specialty, with as many as a dozen different varieties to entice adventurous palates. The servers even give you background information about the harvesting of these cold-water mollusks, as well as tips on how to consume them. The king salmon, cooked on an alder plank, is a classic Northwest dish. The Brooklyn also offers crab cakes, Penn Cove mussels, seafood cannelloni and other items as reasonably priced small plates.

The museum also joins the downtown culinary crowd with its TASTE Restaurant. At lunchtime this is a bustling place full of art lovers, families and business types, with floor-to-ceiling windows bathing the room in light (as well as providing outstanding people-watching). Although it somewhat resembles a high-tech cafeteria, the food here is seriously good. Chef Christopher Conville relies on local, organically grown ingredients whenever possible and the freshness shows, whether it's a salad niçoise with grilled salmon or spring pea soup flavored with sorrel purée. For dessert have a plate of warm cookies—snickerdoodles and oatmeal chocolate cherry chunk are two of the delightful varieties—that come with a little milk for dunking. If the weather's nice and you'd rather eat outside, the restaurant makes yummy sandwiches to go, like turkey and havarti with butter lettuce and herbed, oven-dried tomatoes on eight-grain bread.

It's a given that Seattle is a seafood kind of city, and a couple of restaurants on the downtown waterfront fill the maritime bill nicely. Another given? The oyster bar is a big draw at [Elliott's Oyster House](#), a noisy, energetic place that sits right on Elliott Bay at Pier 56. But Northwest Dungeness crab is a tradition here, and you can get it steamed with butter, chilled with three dipping sauces or marinated in spices and grilled. Dungeness crab cakes, smoked Alaskan king salmon and sesame-seared ahi tuna can be ordered as small plates. For lunch try grilled Yukon River salmon basted with a bourbon barbecue sauce and topped with fresh tomatillo salsa. The pastry chef whips up delights like Granny Smith apple fritters and white chocolate coconut cake with raspberry sauce. Take advantage of the outside deck in summer.

Not far away is another landmark, [Ivar's Acres of Clams](#), which has served the waterfront area since 1938. If you're having dinner, go for the "acres of clams"—two pounds of Manila clams simmered with red potatoes in a garlic and white wine butter sauce. It's truly finger lickin' good. But all of Ivar's seafood satisfies, from grilled salmon with sauteed mustard greens, smoked bacon and cannellini beans to classic fried fish and chips. Their outdoor walk-up service counter does a brisk business in chowders (New England-style clam and Dungeness crab and sweet

corn), and there are picnic tables where you can enjoy your soothing cup or bowl with a view.

Pick a sunny day for lunch or dinner and then snag an outdoor table at [Ray's Cafe](#), the casual, convivial upstairs sibling to Ray's Boathouse in Ballard. Manila clams steamed in beer and dill butter or oysters on the half shell are worthy appetizers. For a main dish you can't go wrong with grilled Alaskan king salmon or Ray's bountiful seafood cioppino in a saffron-tomato broth. An open-face roasted vegetable sandwich on grilled hominy bread is savory vegetarian fare. The seafood goes well with one of the 20 microbrews on tap. Share a dessert—perhaps apple crisp with sour cherries and a brown sugar cinnamon oat topping—and linger over the vista of Shilshoe Bay and the distant Olympic Mountains. Now *this* is good food with a great view.

[Pioneer Square Historic District](#) is a fun gathering place, and locals in search of classic Italian fare have been coming to [Il Terrazzo Carmine](#) (at the district's southern end in the Merrill Place Building) for more than two decades. There's a reason owner Carmine Smeraldo has such a loyal clientele—dishes like pork tenderloin medallions with prosciutto and glazed parmigiano cheese or fettuccine tossed with pesto and prawns are prepared the old-fashioned way and are full of flavor. You won't dine cheaply, but you will dine well. In balmy weather the courtyard at the back of the restaurant is a delightful place to linger.

As terrific as [Pike Place Market](#) is to shop for your own food, it also has some good restaurants. [Cafe Campagne](#) (yes, it's spelled correctly), just above the market in Post Alley, is a little sister to the same-named but more formal dining room upstairs. What with the alley cobblestones outside and the draperied windows inside, this quaint little hideaway does a respectable job of replicating a Parisian cafe. Settle in for a simple bistro-style lunch—say a ham and Gruyère cheese sandwich or quiche and a green salad—and any cares you have will melt away, at least for the afternoon.

Located literally under the market, [Il Bistro](#) is considered by Seattleites to be something of a local secret since it's rather hard to find, at least the

first time. (Hint: It's near the market's information kiosk.) The chef takes good advantage of the surrounding array of produce and catches of the day, so the evening specials burst with freshness and flavor. The rack of lamb is said to be the city's best, and there also are comforting standbys like homemade gnocchi in a sweet tomato sauce. Desserts—from fresh fruit sorbet to Italian cheesecake with an almond biscotti crust—are made in-house. Il Bistro is an ideal choice for a romantic candlelit dinner.

South of downtown near Seattle's football and baseball stadiums is the [Pyramid Alehouse-Brewery & Restaurant](#). If you're in town to see the Seahawks or the Mariners, this is a convenient stop either before or after a game. Families and groups frequent it for the reliable grill standards—spicy chicken wings, pub pizzas, three-bean chicken chili, burgers, fish tacos and a barbecue pork sandwich served with horseradish coleslaw. Locals go for the Thomas Kemper sodas and Pyramid beers, many of which are made on the premises, as well as reasonably priced wines by the glass.

Plenty of restaurants pop up in the eclectic neighborhoods east of downtown toward Lake Washington. Capitol Hill's [Kingfish Cafe](#) is an intimate little diner that rather incongruously—given Seattle's location—serves up ample portions of soul food. Mac and cheese, oozing two cheeses and studded with bits of onion, bell pepper and mushroom, is the down-home real thing. Catfish is rolled in cornmeal, fried on a hot griddle and served with herb-flecked grits and slow-simmered greens. Red beans and rice (also available as a side) is a house favorite, flavored with tasso and andouille sausage, and be sure to order the nicely crispy sweet potato fries. If there's still room, the red velvet cake with cream cheese icing will surely finish you off. The restaurant is owned by two sisters, and their way with time-honored comfort food shows.

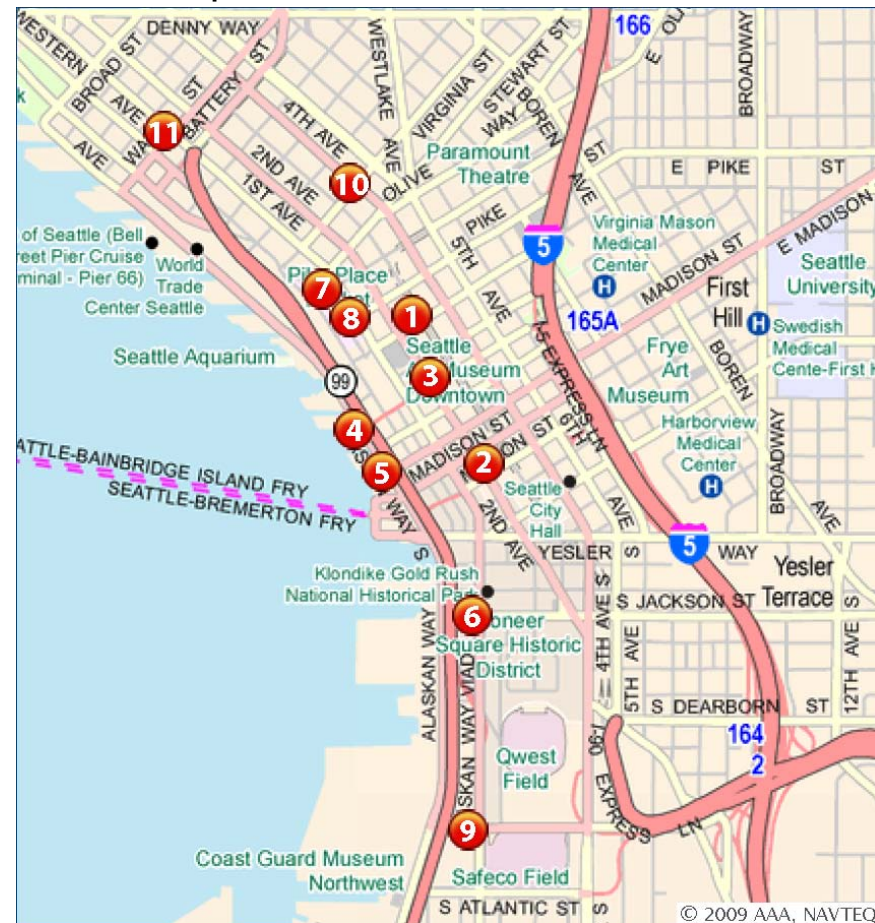
At [Cactus Madison Park](#) the flavor is Mexican, with a little Southwestern thrown in for good measure. An excellent margarita is a good starter. Try the Navajo fry bread as an appetizer, along with house-made guacamole or the tortilla soup. *Puerco adobo*—spice-rubbed, grilled pork tenderloin served with a potato and black bean fritter, chimichurri coleslaw, adobo

and tomatillo sauces and chipotle piña de gallo—is a Mexican standard given a couple of twists. The fajitas (chicken, steak, shrimp or vegetable) and the house chimichanga (chicken, *carnitas*, shredded beef, chorizo or wild mushroom-vegetable) also are mighty tasty. Finish with flan. Cactus' Madison Park location, within a block of Lake Washington, is perfect for an after-dinner stroll.

Award-winning chef/owner Thierry Rautureau mans the helm at [Rover's Restaurant](#), which occupies a charming little Madison Valley house. There's street parking only, which can be tricky, but the hunt for a space is worth the effort to be entertained by the ebullient “chef in the hat” (Rautureau favors a Panama-style chapeau) and sample his five- or eight-course standing menus (you also can order a la carte). The food is classic Northwest with French accents, so expect lots of seafood and game, beautifully prepared vegetables, between-course sorbets to cleanse the palate and a “symphony of desserts” that leave you totally satisfied. The three different multi-course tasting menus are a fine way to sample Rautureau's expertise. The wait staff will be more than happy to suggest wines from the restaurant's extensive list.

Belltown, just northwest of the downtown core, vies for the title of Seattle's trendiest neighborhood. Style thus counts for a lot, and Belltown restaurants are nothing if not stylish. The [Dahlia Lounge](#) has the sort of warm, romantic atmosphere favored by both the business crowd and couples seeking that special experience. Owner Tom Douglas, who presides over six other equally popular Seattle restaurants, is credited with helping develop the concept of Pacific Rim cuisine associated with the Northwest. With chef Brian Walczyk at the helm here, the menu changes daily to take advantage of the seasons. A meltingly tender flat-iron steak, served with creamed spinach and a crispy wedge of grits, and the lemon-scallion crab cakes—a house specialty—exemplify what the Dahlia Lounge does so well. Don't skimp on dessert; either the hefty slice of coconut cream pie or the “little taste” of banana bread pudding with milk chocolate are divine. The adjoining Dahlia Bakery sells all of the breads and sweet creations offered at Douglas' restaurants.

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

El Gaucho does the classic metropolitan steakhouse thing just right. Comfortable banquettes line a dining room designed like a theater in the round. If you like appetizers with a kick, try tuna tartare, tenderloin diablo or the wicked shrimp. The tuxedo-attired wait staff presents Caesar salad, vodka-flamed lamb tenderloin and chateaubriand for two with a flourish. The steaks range from a petite 8-ounce filet to an impressive 24-ounce porterhouse, and you also can order venison chops, an ostrich filet or Australian lobster tail. With all that meat accompaniments are

**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)**

1. Wild Ginger Asian Restaurant & Satay Bar

1401 3rd Ave
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 623-4450

2. Metropolitan Grill

820 2nd Ave
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 624-3287

3. The Brooklyn Seafood, Steak & Oyster House

1212 2nd Ave
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 224-7000

4. Elliott's Oyster House

Pier 56-Alaskan Way, Suite 100
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 623-4340

5. Ivar's Acres of Clams

1001 Alaskan Way
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 624-6852

6. Il Terrazzo Carmine

411 1st Ave S
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 467-7797

7. Cafe Campagne

1600 Post Alley at Pine St
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 728-2233

8. Il Bistro

93A Pike St
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 682-3049

9. Pyramid Alehouse-Brewery & Restaurant

1201 1st Ave S
Seattle, WA 98134
Phone: (206) 682-3377

10. Dahlia Lounge

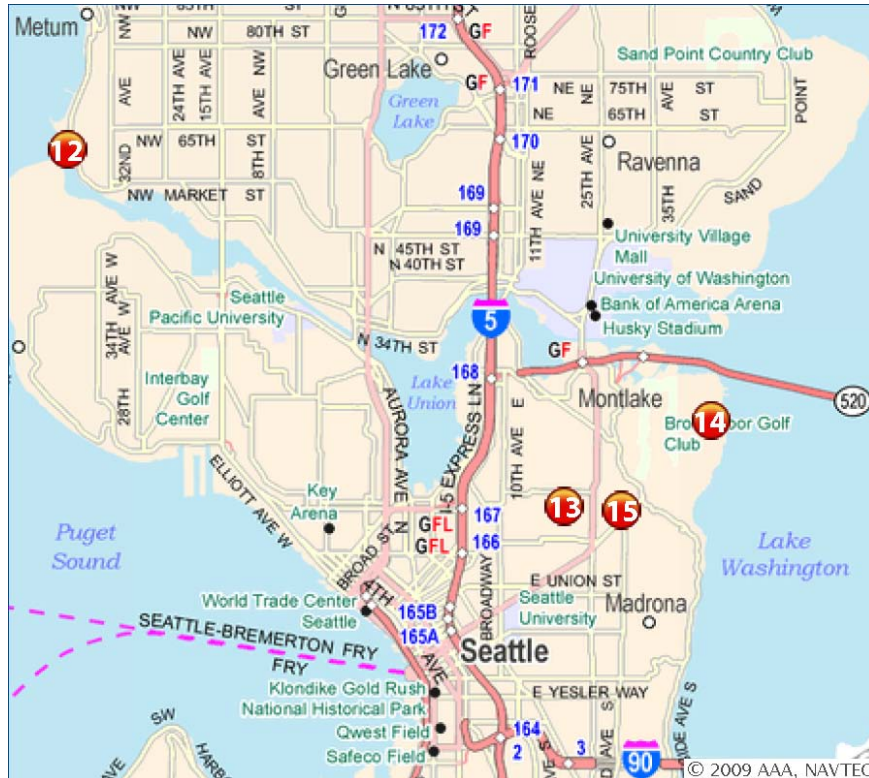
2001 4th Ave
Seattle, WA 98121
Phone: (206) 682-4142

11. El Gaucho

2505 1st Ave
Seattle, WA 98121
Phone: (206) 728-1337

practically an afterthought, but big appetites can choose from the likes of sautéed spinach, asparagus, grilled portobellos or a baked potato. And not just any baked potato—this one's gussied up with butter, cracked pepper, scallions and Tillamook cheddar and even fluffed for you. One of El Gaucho's biggest draws is nightly live music in the main dining room.

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)**

12. Ray's Cafe
6049 Seaview Ave NW
Seattle, WA 98107
Phone: (206) 782-0094

13. Kingfish Cafe
602 19th Ave E
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 320-8757

14. Cactus Madison Park
4220 E Madison St
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 324-4140

15. Rover's Restaurant
2808 E Madison St
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 325-7442

Attractions

In a city with dozens of attractions, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are “Great Experiences for Members.”

If there is one destination that encapsulates Seattle, it's Pike Place Market. This AAA GEM attraction, a city landmark for more than a century, started out as a place for farmers to sell their products and was a key source of cheap food during the Great Depression. The bedrock enterprises—a year-round farmers market and crafts arcade—remain, but you'll also find ethnic groceries, restaurants, bakeries, meat and seafood stalls, bookstores, specialty shops and small businesses. It's a head-spinning assemblage in every sense. How do you “do” Pike Place? It's simple; just dive right in, browsing, nibbling and purchasing as you go. One bit of planning advice: The Market Garage at 1531 Western Ave., just down the hill from Victor Steinbrueck Park, is a convenient place to park.

Nearby is another AAA GEM attraction, the Pioneer Square Historic District. Exploring the 30-odd blocks of this multifaceted urban neighborhood—Seattle's first downtown—it's hard to believe the area was nothing but an immense tidal mudflat in the early 1850s. The harmonious brick architecture dates from the aftermath of a disastrous 1889 fire that destroyed most of the original wooden buildings. People come here to wander the gaggle of galleries and trendy retail outlets, duck into bookstores, celebrate sunny weather at a sidewalk cafe or make a varied nightlife scene.

For some historical perspective, visit Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. This museum chronicles the feverish 1897 gold rush in the Canadian Yukon and Seattle's lucrative role in outfitting prospective treasure seekers with everything from steamship tickets to pack animals. For a glorious view (on clear days) of the city, the Olympic and Cascade ranges and Mount Rainier, head to the observation level on the 35th floor

of the Smith Tower. This was the tallest building west of the Mississippi when it opened in 1914, and the city's loftiest until 1969.

Bordering Pioneer Square on the east is the International District, also known as Chinatown. The neighborhood developed in the late 19th century, a time when Chinese immigrants came to Seattle to find work in lumber mills, on fishing boats and with railroad construction crews. Over the ensuing decades it has become both a home and a community center for Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian Asian Americans. A good one-stop immersion experience is Uwajimaya, a huge retail store with grocery, seafood, meat, produce, deli and gift departments offering a myriad array of the exotic, the unusual and the delicious.

Museums? Seattle has a passel of them. The The Museum of Flight, a AAA GEM attraction, has an aircraft collection that includes early primitive examples like the Lilienthal 1893 Glider—a contraption with curving, bat-like wings that predated the Wright Brothers' first efforts—as well as more recent technological accomplishments (check out the sleek Concorde supersonic airliner).

The Seattle Art Museum Downtown, a AAA GEM attraction, reopened bigger and better in May 2007 following the completion of an ambitious expansion project. The redesigned building at 1st Avenue and University Street has been augmented by the bottom four floors of a 16-story building co-owned with neighboring Washington Mutual Bank, which provides significant additional space for future acquisitions to the permanent collection. The exhibits are organized thematically rather than chronologically, with airy, track-lit galleries offering a captivating mix of everything from African pottery and masks to Native American carved glass to Persian wall hangings.

Along with masterpieces like Anthony van Dyck's "Pompeii II de Bellièvre" and Albert Bierstadt's "Puget Sound on the Pacific Coast," back on display are SAM's beloved Japanese Crow screen and almost 1,000 pieces of porcelain. You can't miss the installation in the glass-walled Brotman Forum (where the ticket counters are located): six automobiles

hanging suspended from the ceiling, each one bristling with a thicket of metal rods equipped with blinking red lights. The museum's iconic "Hammering Man"—a towering black mechanical sculpture complete with movable arm—still presides over the 1st Avenue entrance.

SAM's sister facility, the Seattle Asian Art Museum, is another AAA GEM. Located in Volunteer Park, it has an outstanding collection of paintings, sculpture, calligraphy, porcelain, jades, bronzes and other Asian works of art.

The newest member of the SAM family—and a GEM as well—is Olympic Sculpture Park, which opened in January 2007. This urban green space and showcase for outdoor art installations boasts an especially scenic setting: the downtown Seattle skyline as a backdrop, with a view looking out over Elliott Bay toward the distant Olympic Mountains. Wander the 2,200-foot zigzagging gravel pathway past such works as "Split," a gracefully lifelike stainless-steel tree, and "Typewriter Eraser, Scale X," an outsize example of a commonly recognized object (at least for those over a certain age). The "Father and Son" fountain standing at Western Avenue and Pier 70 is a provocative work that conveys, through water and two nude figures, the emotional vulnerability that can exist between parent and child. The park's trees, plants and flowers evoke several different Pacific Northwest landscapes.

Switch gears from the artistic to the fantastic at the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame, on the grounds of Seattle Center. This AAA GEM attraction salutes all things visionary with exhibit galleries such as Brave New Worlds, which displays computer-generated vistas of cityscapes from visually innovative films like "Blade Runner" and "The Matrix." The museum's hall of fame honors the genre's greats, from authors Jules Verne and H.G. Wells to filmmaker Steven Spielberg to stop-motion animator Ray Harryhausen. And no fan will want to miss the fearsomely toothy Alien Queen, who engaged in a memorable fight to the death with Sigourney Weaver in the sci-fi classic "Aliens."

The museum shares a building with the Experience Music Project (EMP), another AAA GEM attraction. Both lauded and derided by Seattleites, the

unusual structure somewhat resembles a melting electric guitar. Inside are exhibit galleries celebrating the diversity of popular music, from blues and jazz to rock, punk, funk and hip-hop. One exhibit is devoted to Seattle-born Jimi Hendrix, whose pioneering blend of blues and psychedelia and awesome guitar mastery revolutionized pop music in the late '60s. A third Seattle Center museum, the venerable [Pacific Science Center](#), has lots of kid-friendly interactive exhibits, although everyone will get a kick out of the moving robotic dinosaurs (they even roar) and appreciate the beauty of the winged creatures flitting about in the Tropical Butterfly House.

The Emerald City is a particularly apt nickname, and its botanical riches can be enjoyed at both [Volunteer Park](#) and the [Washington Park Arboretum](#). Volunteer Park, in the Capitol Hill neighborhood, is Seattle's most elegant greensward, an expanse of formal gardens, glass-surfaced ponds, and noble cedars and spruces surrounded by fine old mansions. A riot of cactuses, orchids and tropical vegetation grows in the park's steel and cast-iron Conservatory. The arboretum, a AAA GEM, spreads south from Union Bay, encompassing 200 wooded acres in which thrive thousands of species of trees, shrubs and flowers from the Pacific Northwest and around the world. It looks simultaneously manicured and wild, and there's beauty in every season. Take a slow spin along scenic Arboretum Drive, then get out of the car for a peaceful stroll through the Japanese Garden, a serene haven of evergreens, camellias and Japanese maples planted among rocks and sculptures.

Water, of course, plays an instrumental role in past and present Seattle history. The [Lake Washington Ship Canal](#) and [Hiram M. Chittenden Locks](#) are AAA GEM attractions connecting saltwater Puget Sound with the freshwater network formed by Salmon Bay, Lake Union, Portage Bay, Union Bay and Lake Washington. "Seattle's ditch" opened in 1917 to a flotilla of vessels led by the *Roosevelt*, the flagship of Adm. Robert Edwin Peary's North Pole expedition, and are still among the nation's busiest. A fish ladder enables sockeye, chinook and coho salmon to swim on a gradual incline as they migrate to their spawning grounds in upstream creeks and rivers.

The Odyssey Maritime Discovery Center, appropriately located on the downtown waterfront, has interactive exhibits wonderfully illustrating Seattle's role in marine trade, including Puget Sound's role as the gateway to the Pacific Rim. Take the [Argosy Cruises](#) narrated boat tour of the waterfront and shipyards to gain a suitably salty appreciation of the city's maritime face. Argosy also offers a popular 2.5-hour Locks Cruise that tours the harbor and includes passage through the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Chittenden Locks.

For a slightly different perspective of the water, drive across the [Evergreen Point Floating Bridge](#)—the world's longest, with 33 separate pontoon units—and the Lake Washington Floating Bridge, about 1,000 feet shorter. Both bridges are prone to traffic congestion, and Evergreen Point's days may eventually be numbered due to persistent mechanical problems, but both offer views of the lake, shoreline neighborhoods and the Cascades, from Mount Rainier in the south to Mount Baker in the north.

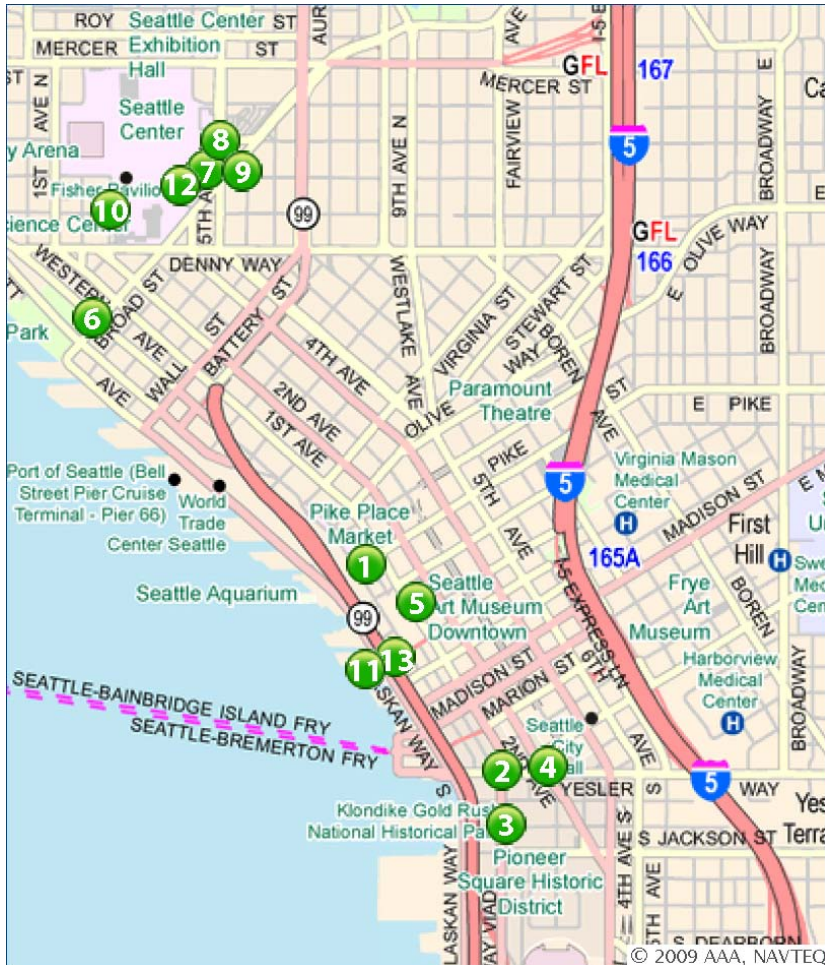
Perhaps the most conventionally touristy thing to do in Seattle is trek to the [Space Needle](#). The AAA GEM attraction's futuristic space-age look was conceived as a symbolic icon for the 1962 World's Fair. The kind of place longtime residents pay little attention to but first-time visitors should not miss, it offers a breathtaking 360-degree panorama from the observation deck at the 520-foot level; telescopes installed on the outside walkway intensify the views.

Another tourist favorite and AAA GEM attraction is the [Woodland Park Zoo](#), known for its naturalistic habitats representing different bioclimatic zones. Bears, river otters and bald eagles are among the inhabitants of Northern Trail, which replicates a harsh cold-weather environment, while the elephants of Tropical Asia and the jaguars, gorillas, monkeys and lemurs of the Tropical Rain Forest are accustomed to more comfy temperatures.

Finally, embark on a scenic voyage to pint-size Blake Island in Puget Sound and experience yet another AAA GEM attraction, [Tillicum Village Northwest Coast Indian Cultural Center](#). Its centerpiece, a huge cedar

longhouse, lies snug against a backdrop of dense green forest and recalls the ancient communal dwellings built by Northwest Coast Indians. You're sure to enjoy the stage show honoring music and dance traditions, and the salmon dinner that precedes it—the delectable fish is baked on cedar stakes over an open fire and basted with lemon butter—is cause for further celebration.

Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Attractions Details - *Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)*



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Pike Place Market

85 Pike St
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 682-7453



2. Pioneer Square Historic District

118 S. Main St
Seattle, WA 98104



3. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

319 2nd Ave S
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 220-4240

4. Smith Tower

506 2nd Ave
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 622-4004



5. Seattle Art Museum Downtown

1300 1st Ave
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 654-3137



6. Olympic Sculpture Park

2901 Western Ave
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 654-3100



7. Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame

325 5th Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 770-2702



8. Seattle Center

305 Harrison St
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 684-7200



9. Experience Music Project (EMP)

325 5th Ave N
Seattle, WA 98121
Phone: (877) 454-7836



10. Pacific Science Center

200 2nd Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 443-2001



11. Argosy Cruises

Alaskan Way & Seneca St.
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (800) 642-7816



12. Space Needle

219 4th Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 905-2100

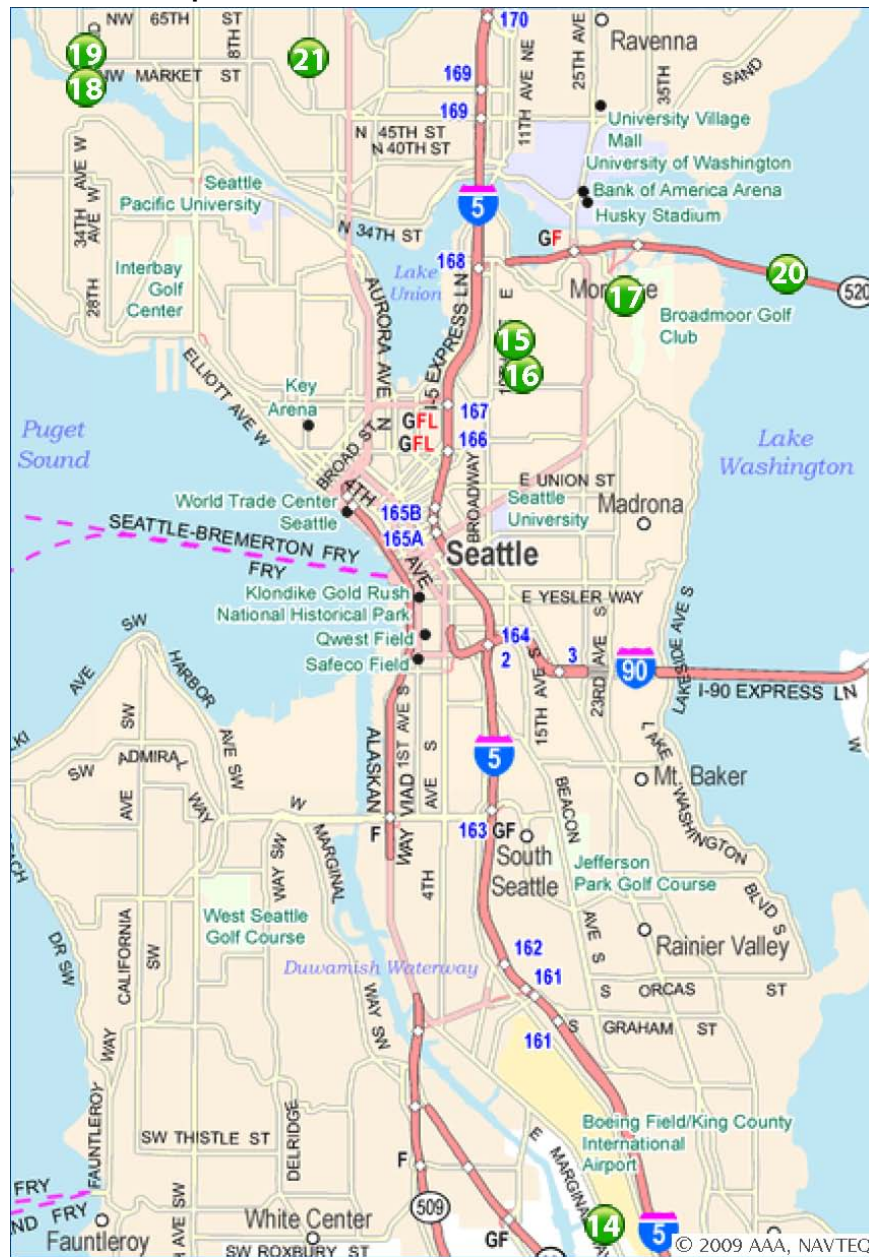


13. Tillicum Village

Alaskan Way & Seneca St
Blake Island, WA
Phone: (206) 623-1445





Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Attractions Details - Get additional information on AAA.com

-  - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*
-  - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

14. The Museum of Flight

9404 E. Marginal Way S
Seattle, WA 98108
Phone: (206) 764-5720



15. Seattle Asian Art Museum

1400 E. Prospect St
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 654-3100



16. Volunteer Park

1400 E. Galer St
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 684-4743

17. Washington Park Arboretum

2300 Arboretum Dr E
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 543-8800



18. Lake Washington Ship Canal

3015 NW 54th St
Seattle, WA 98107
Phone: (206) 783-7059



19. Hiram M. Chittenden Locks

4 mi. w. of I-5 exit 169
Seattle, WA 98107
Phone: (206) 783-7059



20. Evergreen Point Floating Bridge

Seattle, WA 98119

Events

In addition to its many cultural and historic landmarks, this destination hosts a number of outstanding festivals and events that may coincide with your visit. GEMs are “Great Experiences for Members.”

Cold, gray days inevitably lead to thoughts of spring, and the Northwest Flower and Garden Show is a harbinger of the coming season. This huge event, held at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center, has exhibits by practically every plant society and horticultural organization you can think of, plus florist competitions and an orchid show. This is an eagerly awaited annual pilgrimage for many Northwest gardeners. For more flowers, head to the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, about 60 miles

north of Seattle. The valley is one of the nation's prime suppliers of commercial spring bulbs, and it's quite a sight to see entire fields of these beauties. Festival activities for this AAA GEM event run throughout April and include art exhibits, farm tours and an air show. Mother Nature, however, can't be pinned down when it comes to peak bloom time.

Since 1913, the Seattle Yacht Club has sponsored Opening Day, held the first Saturday in May. The unofficial beginning of boating season, it starts with a cannon blast as the Montlake Bridge is raised. A lively



procession of watercraft—from kayaks to sailboats to yachts—then threads through the Montlake Cut between Portage and Union bays, bound for Lake Washington. Tugboat races along the downtown waterfront are the highlight of Seattle Maritime Festival in mid-May.

The University District Street Fair, also in mid-May, is the kickoff event of Seattle's festival season. University Way N.E. becomes an extravaganza of craft booths, food booths and stages for theater and live music. It's always a magnet for street performers, and the people-watching rivals the entertainment.

Memorial Day weekend brings the Northwest Folklife Festival, an ethnic and cultural showcase for music and dance, visual arts and folklore exhibits, and craft and cooking demonstrations. You can choose from a whopping 1,000 performances on 19 different stages, and it's all free. The festival takes place on the Seattle Center grounds.

The Seattle International Film Festival is one of the country's largest, bringing directors, actors and critics who participate in film forums and post-screening Q&A sessions. This is a chance to see releases from both first-time and well-known directors, as well as sneak previews, obscure foreign films, documentaries and special archival programs—not your typical multiplex fare. Many screenings take place at the Egyptian

Theater on Capitol Hill. The 3-week festival runs from late May through mid-June.

Pike Place Market feels like a great big festival every day, and doubly so the first weekend in June during the Pike Place Market Street Festival. The fun includes arts, crafts, food, music, activities for kids and a "Strut Your Mutt" dog show. Just look for the street booths set up along Pike Place.

Fremont Fair, a AAA GEM event, takes place in mid-June. It welcomes the summer solstice in a neighborhood Seattleites fondly refer to as "the center of the universe." This is a true community celebration—one of its goals is to increase awareness of the needs of low-income residents—as well as an old-fashioned street fair, with loads of crafts, plenty of food, all kinds of live music, a parade and such offbeat events as the Briefcase Relay Race.

Seafair, Seattle's summer blowout, occurs from early July to early August. The air show provided by a squadron of U.S. Navy Blue Angels as they streak across the sky above Lake Washington is an exciting high point, but there's also the Torchlight Parade, neighborhood parades and festivals, tours of naval vessels, a beauty pageant, hydroplane races and the Milk Carton Derby, which kicks off the whole shebang. And if you're feeling particularly energetic, you can start training for Seafair's marathon, triathlon or torchlight run.

Considerably less strenuous is Bite of Seattle, a food festival and AAA GEM event held at Seattle Center in late July. More than 50 local restaurants contribute their specialties, and you can also take in an outdoor concert or view the ice-carving competition. Don't forget to bring your appetite.

Seattle also hosts Bumbershoot over the Labor Day weekend. This is one of the city's best-known events, and no less an authority than *Rolling Stone* proclaims it the coolest rock festival in Seattle. But Bumbershoot also spotlights the entire spectrum of arts: music, theater, dance, film, visual and literary.

Seattle ends the year with the [Argosy Christmas Ship Festival](#), a AAA GEM event that occurs through most of December. Illuminated boats departing from Pier 56 cruise to various waterfront communities, where some of the Pacific Northwest's noteworthy choral groups provide appropriately seasonal musical accompaniment. It's a fine way to get into the holiday spirit.

Things to Do

Shopping

Seattle is one of those cities where a ho-hum mall is one of the *least* enticing shopping choices. Oh, there are plenty of them—it's just that there are so many other interesting places to browse and spend your hard-earned money.

First and foremost is Pike Place Market. Let's get the small caveats out of the way. Yes, it's touristy. Yes, it can get crowded (especially on Saturday and most other days beginning around 11 a.m. until 2 or 3). Yes, street parking is practically nonexistent (the Pike Place Market Parking Garage at 1531 Western Ave. is your best bet if driving). Yes, it helps to know where the restrooms are (on the downstairs level at the north and south ends of the Main Arcade).

But these are minor inconveniences in the face of bountiful pleasures. Those in the know—among them Seattleites who do their regular food shopping here—go early on a weekday morning when the vendors are setting up. Fruit, vegetables and flowers are market mainstays, and locally grown so they change with the seasons. Grab some crisp apples, a golden peach or a perfect little bunch of grapes. Select a mixed bouquet of vibrantly colorful blooms. Then head to one of the market bakeries (Pike Place Bakery and Three Girls Bakery are both divine) for a cinnamon and sugar-glazed apple fritter or a flaky almond croissant. Pick up a paper sack full of hot, fresh mini doughnuts from Daily Dozen Donuts and try not to eat every single one.

In other words, Pike Place Market is browser's heaven. The sights, the smells, the sidewalk musicians, the seafood-tossing fishmongers and the ambling crowds all make it a sensory experience of the highest order. And don't forget to explore the warren of art, craft and clothing shops "DownUnder," where you'll find everything from nag champa and incense burners (Taj Mahal Emporium) to rings, bracelets and necklaces (House of Jade) to squirt pens, fart bombs and joy buzzers (The Magic Shop). And we haven't even mentioned Post Alley (in front of the Main Arcade), the 1st Avenue Buildings (between Stewart and Virginia streets) and the Pine to Stewart Block.

You could easily spend the whole day here, but there's lots more shopping to be done. The Pioneer Square Historic District has plenty of window-shopping potential. Poke around Pioneer Square Antique Mall (602 1st Ave. at James Street) for vintage jewelry, collectibles, clocks and toys. Laguna Vintage Pottery (116 S. Washington St.) is packed with things like ceramic plates and hand-painted vases. Men who aren't afraid to wear kilts will find exactly what they're looking for at Utilikilts (620 1st Ave.). Elliott Bay Book Co. (101 S. Main St. at 1st Avenue) is the perfect place to look for a new tome and then leaf through it in their cozy downstairs cafe over coffee and something yummy like eggs scrambled with smoked trout, bits of bacon and crunchy scallions. This bookstore is a Pioneer Square institution.

The neighboring International District is fun to explore. The Yummy House Bakery (522 6th Ave. S.; look for the yellow sign) has all kinds of "Hong Kong-style" cakes and pastries, including squares of feather-light sponge cake—usually sitting on a tray on top of the order counter—egg tarts and a variety of bubble teas. For a one-stop Asian shopping immersion experience, the place to go is Uwajimaya (600 5th Ave. S.). It's a combination grocery, gift and housewares emporium with lots of unusual items.

Seattle's downtown retail core is between 3rd and 7th avenues and Pine and University streets. This is where you'll find major department stores like Macy's and Nordstrom, familiar names like Old Navy, The Gap,

Barnes and Noble and Borders, and a couple of upscale shopping complexes. The four levels at Pacific Place (6th Avenue and Pine Street) offer the usual mix of men's and women's apparel, shoe, jewelry, gift and electronics retailers, plus restaurants and an 11-screen multiplex.

There are more stores, specialty shops and eateries at Westlake Center (Pine Street between 4th and 5th avenues) and City Centre (1420 5th Ave. at Pike Street). For shopping toward the luxury end of the scale—Brooks Brothers, Louis Vuitton and so forth—try Rainier Square (5th Avenue and University Street).

It stands to reason that there would be an REI in outdoor recreation-minded Seattle. If it has anything to do with camping, hiking, climbing, cycling, paddling, skiing or snowboarding, Recreational Equipment Inc. (at Eastlake Avenue and John Street) has it. This flagship store isn't just a place to repair your skis or try on backpacks—there's a mountain bike test trail, a 65-foot climbing pinnacle and stations where you can try out all kinds of recreational gear. The hiker's trail to the entrance winds past trees and waterfalls. Street parking is scarce, so take advantage of the store's parking garage; the first hour is free.

Sometimes you just want to give in to a good old-fashioned tourist trap, and Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (1001 Alaskan Way at Pier 54) will definitely satisfy the urge. In business since 1899, this place bills itself as a museum, but shrunken heads, prehistoric elephant tusks and the Lord's Prayer engraved on a grain of rice all play second fiddle to the merchandise: a hodgepodge of gag gifts, tchotchkes, Native American art and nautically themed collectibles. Don't miss the multiple rows of butterflies and insects in display cases on the wall above the main checkout counter.

Two Seattle neighborhoods—Capitol Hill and Fremont—are funky shopping destinations. The shops along Broadway reflect Capitol Hill's friendly but edgy vibe: Vintage clothing, lots of leather, fishnets and outrageous footwear (think snakeskin platform boots) are what you'll find at places like Broadway Boutique (113 Broadway E.), Metro Clothing Co. (231 Broadway E.) and the Red Light, 312 Broadway E. (their display

window has mannequins decked out in all manner of punk attire). Massai (between Olive Way and Thomas Street) has flowing scarves, exotic gifts and a very cool collection of African masks.

Compact Fremont is ideal for strolling and has an eclectic assortment of shops. Frank and Dunya (3418 Fremont Ave. N.) sells “functional, fun and fine art” created by Northwest artists. If you're looking for something just a bit racy, go no further than Bellefleur Lingerie (720 N. 35th St.). In addition to carnivorous plants and other greenhouse tropicals, The Indoor Sun Shoppe (160 N. Canal St. at Phinney Avenue N.) stocks a full range of therapy lighting to combat those gloomy Seattle winters. After your shopping spree, kick back with a cup of java at Caffe Ladro (452 N. 36th St.). This popular Seattle chain offers organic coffee and yummy baked goods made on the premises.

And if you don't consider a shopping trip complete without hitting at least one mall, make it University Village (N.E. 45th Street and 25th Avenue E.), especially on a sunny day. This outdoor shopping plaza, sprinkled with fountains and animal sculptures, offers a familiar lineup of chain retailers that includes Pottery Barn, Banana Republic, Williams-Sonoma and Restoration Hardware.

Nightlife

Maybe it's all that caffeine that helps rev up a night out in Seattle. Or perhaps the often gloomy weather makes people *really* determined to have fun. Whatever the reason, there's something for everybody after dark, from laid-back neighborhood hangouts to oh-so-hip clubs to elegant lounges.

Pioneer Square has long been a magnet for evening entertainment. The bars here are no frills, the music is mostly raucous rock or blues, and the crowds of frat boys and other partiers can be on the drunk and disorderly side. If you're up for a rowdy old time, try The Central Saloon (207 1st Ave.), where bands play nightly. The Last Supper Club (124 S. Washington St.) has three strobe-lit floors, state-of-the-art sound, resident DJs and theme nights: rock band contests on Wednesdays,

techno on Thursdays, hip-hop and house on Fridays, and DJ sets on Saturdays and Sundays. Things are a bit more sedate at the New Orleans Creole Restaurant (114 1st Ave. S.), where the live jazz and blues Monday through Thursday evenings winds down by the civilized hour of 10 p.m.

Although the vendors at nearby Pike Place Market close up shop at the end of the day, you never know when a street busker might still be hanging out, regaling passers-by with a sea chantey or an impassioned Bob Dylan folk tune. Several Pike Place restaurants and bars also offer live music. Kells Irish Restaurant & Pub, tucked above the market at 1916 Post Alley, has a jolly atmosphere, an outdoor patio and live Irish music nightly beginning around 9. A few doors away at 1919 Post Alley, The Pink Door offers cabaret entertainment every night but Monday, including a burlesque show on Saturday (cover charge is \$15).

The Triple Door, downtown on Union Street across from Benaroya Hall, is another restaurant that also features live music (mainly jazz and blues) in its Musicquarium Lounge and the Mainstage, a sleek, snazzy 300-seat theater. Dimitriou's Jazz Alley (6th Avenue and Lenora Street) is the city's premier showcase. One of the top jazz clubs on the West Coast, it books big-name acts like the Count Basie Orchestra and Nancy Wilson. You can have a swell dinner here, too. Reservations are recommended; phone (206) 441-9729.

Seattle's music scene is an enormously influential one (remember alternative rock?), and there are plenty of clubs where you can catch local up and comers like the Fleet Foxes as well as the latest buzzed-about, under-the-radar bands. Well-known rockers and hip-hoppers play at Showbox at the Market, 1st Avenue and Pike Street across from Pike Place Market, and at Showbox SoDo, one block south of Safeco Field at 1st Avenue and Massachusetts Street. The Crocodile (formerly the Crocodile Café), in Belltown at the corner of 2nd Avenue and Blanchard Street, reopened in March 2009 after being shuttered for more than a year. Local and out-of-town indie bands along with some better-known names fill the bill, much like the Crocodile of old.

A similar lineup (i.e., bands not yet big enough to fill the Showbox) appears at Neumo's, in Capitol Hill on Pike Street (a block east of Broadway). Another Capitol Hill club is Chop Suey (1325 E. Madison St.), where a freewheeling mix of indie, hip-hop and electro acts—mostly local but with a sprinkling of national and international names thrown in—draws a young, musically hip crowd.

Gay-friendly, punked-out Capitol Hill also has some of Seattle's coolest bars. The Cha Cha Lounge (1013 E. Pike St., a block east of Broadway) has great atmosphere: red lighting, sombreros hanging from the ceiling, disco balls and flashy *lucha libre* (Mexican wrestling) paraphernalia everywhere. It's in the basement of Bimbo's Bitchin' Burrito Kitchen; just take the stairs down. The Comet Tavern, 922 E. Pike St., is a classic dive bar favored by beer drinkers who come for rowdy shows headlined by punk, garage and stoner rock bands.

Ballard, a neighborhood that has diversified from its beginnings as a Scandinavian fishing community, has its own highly regarded watering holes. If you lean toward the twangy side of rock, head on down to the Tractor Tavern (5213 Ballard Ave. N.W.). The atmosphere is bare bones and the beer comes in plastic cups; this is first and foremost a place to watch live bands, with a good view of the stage from every spot in the room. The Sunset Tavern (5433 Ballard Ave. N.W.) is a bit more unruly: you're cramped and crowded but close to the action, and the bands rock out more. Don't come here if you're looking for a mellow evening.

In Fremont, the High Dive (513 N. 36th St.) is yet another club with shows practically every night—mostly local bands looking to establish themselves. They have live music happy hours three Saturdays a month. The cover charge is almost always under \$10, so an evening here won't dent your wallet. If you just want to sit and chat in a quieter atmosphere stop by Fremont Coffee (459 N. 36th St.), in a rambling old house with a wraparound porch and several rooms filled with comfy chairs. In addition to frothy lattes and imported beers they sell locally made, organic-vegan Mighty-O Donuts (try the chocolate raspberry).

Fremont also has its own summer tradition: drive-in movies. On Saturday nights from late June to early September a mix of popcorn blockbusters and family films are shown in the parking lot at N. 35th Street and Phinney Ave. N. The schedule includes three “Twisted Flicks”—cheesy B-movie groaners with the original soundtrack replaced by dialogue, sound effects and music courtesy of Jet City Improv cast members. Bring your own chairs; local vendors provide hot dogs and popcorn. The movie starts at dusk, but there are games and entertainment before the show. Tickets are \$5; for more details phone (206) 781-4230.

Equally fun, although much more expensive, is an evening at Teatro ZinZanni. This combination of music, dance, comedy and exotic Cirque du Soleil-inspired acrobatics and illusions is half cabaret, half vaudeville and takes place above, around and right alongside as you dine in multi-course splendor. Another reason to go: Tom Douglas, the celebrity chef who owns Seattle’s deservedly celebrated Dahlia Lounge restaurant, is in charge of the changing menu. Advance reservations are highly recommended. A reminder: The show lasts 3 hours and the humor is sophisticated, so leave little kids at home.

And what if you just want peace, quiet and a beautiful setting? Watching the sun drop behind distant mountains at Olympic Sculpture Park is a simple yet deeply rewarding pleasure. Or claim a spot at dusk along the wall in little Kerry Park (on W. Highland Drive at 2nd Avenue W.) and marvel as the Seattle skyline starts to light up while an illuminated ferry glides across Elliott Bay. It’s free. And it’s magical.

Note: Use common sense when it comes to staying safe after dark. Downtown areas like Pioneer Square and Belltown can be dicey to wander around late at night; if in doubt, take a cab.

Sports and Recreation

Seattle offers sports from skin diving to mountain climbing; its residents boast that its location and climate make it possible to sail in the morning and ski that afternoon. The extensive city park system includes more than

5,000 acres of parkland and boulevards. The many state parks in the vicinity provide recreational and camping facilities.

A variety of local outdoor recreation books and maps are sold in the Travel Store at AAA Washington offices in the metropolitan area.

Spectator sports run the gamut in Seattle. There is automobile racing at two major raceways in the area: Pacific Raceways in Kent, (253) 639-5927, and Evergreen Speedway in Monroe, (360) 805-6100. Racing schedules vary.

The NFL’s Seattle Seahawks play football at Qwest Field, 800 Occidental Ave. S. This also is the venue for Sounders major league **soccer** games. Major league baseball is represented by the Mariners, who play at Safeco Field; the 47,116-seat stadium with a retractable roof is at First Avenue S. and S. Atlantic St.

The Seattle Storm plays WNBA basketball in KeyArena at Seattle Center. The Seattle Thunderbirds hockey team takes to the ice at the ShoWare Center in Kent. Area college teams participate in all major sports.

During the August Seafair, Lake Washington provides a course for hydroplane races. Boating is available on freshwater Lake Washington, saltwater Puget Sound or both, thanks to the locks and canal connecting the two. A multitude of marinas provides moorage facilities. Any type of craft can be rented, from small sailboats or canoes to large seagoing yachts.

Golf courses, both municipal and commercial, are plentiful, as are driving ranges and pitch and putt courses. Some private clubs extend reciprocal privileges to visitors who are members of certain out-of-town golf clubs. The Seattle Parks and Recreation Department owns three 18-hole courses operated by Premier Golf Centers; phone (206) 285-2200 for information.

Hiking and horseback riding enthusiasts will find miles of forest trails in nearby areas and mountains. The U.S. Forest Service, phone (206) 470-

4060, can provide information about trails. The telephone directories contain listings of stables and academies.

Fishing opportunities are plentiful. Freshwater fishing is available from piers at Green Lake and Lake Washington, in county parks and in area lakes and streams. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, phone (425) 775-1311, is the best source for freshwater license requirements and information.

Spot Tail Salmon Guides offers private salmon fishing and saltwater fly-fishing trips daily; phone (206) 295-7031. Piers 57 and 86 are public fishing piers on Elliott Bay. Charters for Puget Sound or deep-sea fishing off the coast can be arranged; consult the telephone directories.

White-water rafting, float trips and bald eagle sightseeing tours are offered on rivers in the Cascades and Olympics. The season for white-water rafting is April through September; bald eagle sightseeing tours take place December through February. Rates for such trips are commensurate with offerings, but the average fee for a full-day excursion is \$60-\$90.

Reservations for trips can be made through the following agencies: Downstream River Runners, (206) 906-9227; River Recreation, Inc., (800) 464-5899; Riverrider.com, (206) 448-7238 or (800) 448-7238; and Rivers Inc., (425) 822-5296. Most agencies' offices are open weekdays during working hours.

Kayaking is available on area lakes including Lake Union. Rentals and tours are available from Northwest Outdoor Center on Lake Union, (206) 281-9694 or (800) 683-0637; and Moss Bay Rowing & Kayak Center, (206) 682-2031. Alki Kayak Tours offers guided sea kayaking trips, (206) 953-0237. Parasailing on Elliott Bay is offered during the summer months; contact Pier 57 at Bell Street Harbor at (206) 622-5757.

Mountain climbing and skiing are possible at many challenging spots in the Seattle area. Guided trips to the summit of Mount Rainier as well as instructions in climbing techniques are available. Major ski areas within a

short drive of the city are noted under the listings for Snoqualmie Pass, Skykomish and Crystal Mountain.

Swimming and scuba diving are favorite summer sports. There are saltwater beaches at Alki Gardens and Golden Gardens, freshwater beaches on Lake Washington and Green Lake, and several public swimming pools within the city. The telephone directory provides information about scuba diving instruction and equipment rental.

Since the 1890s bicycling has been a popular sport in Seattle. The city has 90 miles of signed bike routes and 30 miles of bike-pedestrian trails. The free Seattle Bicycling Guide Map details the city's extensive network of bicycle lanes, bicycle trails and streets commonly used by bicyclists. The map is available at area bicycle shops, branches of the public library and from the City Transportation Department; phone (206) 684-7583.

The Burke-Gilman Trail, designed for bicycling and hiking, extends 15.5 miles from 8th Ave. N.W. and Leary Way to Tracy Owen Station Park at 61st Avenue and SR 522. The trail skirts the University of Washington campus and offers good views of the area. North of Lake Washington it connects with the Sammamish River Trail, which then continues another 12 miles to Marymoor Park.

One of Seattle's most popular bicycle paths is the nearly 3-mile paved trail encircling Green Lake in the park of the same name. Many other routes connect with the city parks; others are along the waterfront.

Bike rentals are available at the Montlake Bicycle Shop, 2223 24th Ave. E., phone (206) 329-7333, and at Recycled Cycles, 1007 N.E. Boat St., phone (206) 547-4491.

Facilities for tennis and other sports also are available. The city park department maintains nearly 100 public courts, some of which are lighted for night matches; several private tennis clubs extend reciprocal privileges to travelers. Commercial ranges for rifle and skeet shooting are listed in the telephone directory. City parks have facilities for both jogging and lawn bowling. For further information phone (206) 684-4075.

Performing Arts

Seattle Center is the cultural focus of metropolitan Seattle. Its Marion Oliver McCaw Hall is the headquarters of the Seattle Opera Association, which presents several full-scale operatic productions during its August through May season; phone (206) 389-7676 or (800) 426-1619.

The Seattle Symphony plays at Benaroya Hall, on 2nd Avenue between Union and University streets. Nearly 200 concerts take place between September and July. Family concerts, recitals and other musical events also are offered. Tours of the building are given Tues. and Fri. at noon and 1; phone (206) 215-4747, (866) 833-4747 or (206) 215-4856 for tour information.

Bagley Wright Theatre at Seattle Center houses the nationally acclaimed Seattle Repertory Theatre Company, which presents six plays from early September through early May; for curtain times phone (206) 443-2222 or (877) 900-9285.

Broadway shows are the attraction at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, 1308 5th Ave.; phone (206) 625-1900. Traveling shows, comics and popular recording artists (everything from teen pop to hard rock) take the stage at the Paramount Theatre, downtown at 911 Pine St., and the Moore Theatre, 1932 2nd Ave.; phone (206) 682-1414.

Popular with summer playgoers are A Contemporary Theater (ACT) at 700 Union St., phone (206) 292-7676; and the Intiman at the Seattle Center Playhouse, phone (206) 269-1900. Summer brings open-air concerts to the Woodland Park Zoo, the White River Amphitheater in Auburn, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery in Woodinville and Marymoor Park in Redmond. Check the newspapers for full listings.

Insider Info

Attraction Passes

Seattle CityPass provides Seattle visitors an opportunity to save almost 50 percent off the admission prices of five popular area attractions. CityPass ticket booklets can be purchased at any of the participating

attractions: Argosy Cruises Harbor Tours, The Museum of Flight or the Experience Music Project (EMP) and Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame, the Pacific Science Center, the Seattle Aquarium, the Woodland Park Zoo and the Space Needle (for two visits within a 24-hour period). Tickets, which are valid for 9 days from first date of use, are \$59; ages 4-12, \$44. Rates are valid Mar. 1, 2010 through Feb. 28, 2011. For further information phone (208) 787-4300 or (888) 330-5008.

Go Seattle Card is an all-access attraction pass offering admission to 35 Seattle attractions, including the Space Needle, The Museum of Flight, Experience Music Project (EMP), Woodland Park Zoo, Pacific Science Center, Argosy Cruises and more. The card is priced as low as \$21 per day (based on a 7-day card). Go Seattle Card is available at the Argosy Cruises ticket booth at Pier 55 (1101 Alaskan Way); phone (800) 887-9103.

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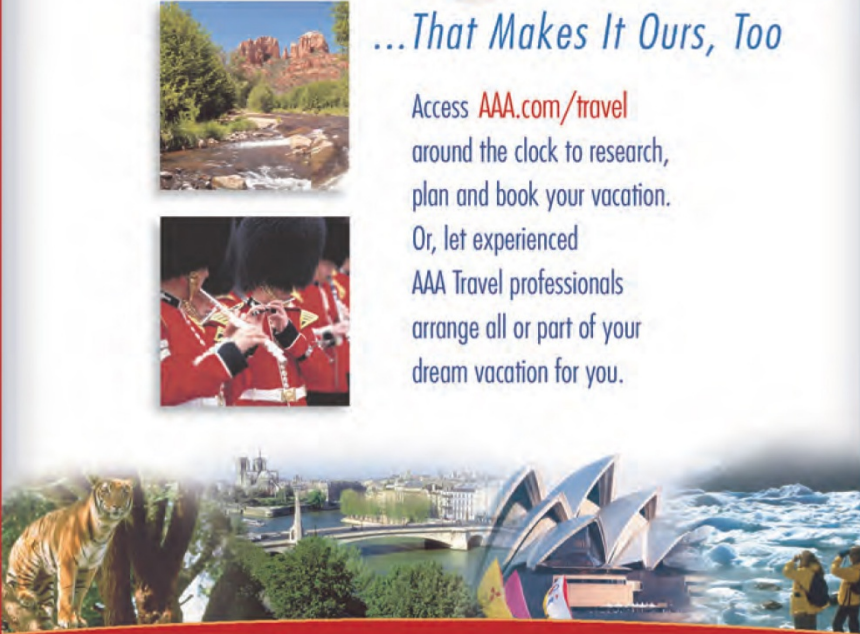
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